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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the policy statement on youth employment from the National Collaboration for Youth (NCY). An introduction briefly explains the role of the NCY with regard to youth employment and describes the types of programs and services supported by NCY. A section on background provides statistics on teenagers and employment from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and identifies factors related to the nature and dimensions of the youth employment problem. Myths about teenage unemployment which have hindered society's response to the problem are enumerated and discussed. Also included in the background section are discussions of legislative history, funding history, reasons for NCY interest, and the importance of NCY involvement in the problem of youth employment. The current status of youth employment is examined in the next section. Legislation pending in the United States Congress is listed, current funding status is given, and the current law, the Job Training Partnership Act, is described. Six programs of NCY member agencies are briefly described. The paper concludes with a record of NCY action on the issue of youth employment. (NRB)

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NATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR YOUTH

An affinity group of The National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, Inc.

1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. • Suite 424A • Washington, D.C. 20036 • (202) 296-1515

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POLICY STATEMENT: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

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The National Collaboration for Youth is an affinity group of The National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations. Currently chaired by Solon B. Cousins, National Executive Director, YMCA of the USA, the Collaboration is comprised of fourteen national, private, nonprofit agencies, which serve over 25 million children and youth.

The member organizations comprise over 13,000 local program units and have deep roots in their communities, providing programs and services designed to foster the development of each individual toward a productive, fulfilling, and responsible adulthood.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT POLICY STATEMENT

I. Introduction

1. NCY agencies, because of their large membership, are an effective outreach and recruiting mechanism. They can identify many youth who could benefit from employment and training programs, but who would not otherwise take advantage of these services.

2. Through the use of volunteers, NCY agencies can achieve economies in the delivery of many services.

3. The "mainstream" approach of NCY agencies can be important to low-income youth who lack exposure to traditional socialization mechanisms.

4. Youth-serving agencies are frequently employers of disadvantaged youth. NCY agencies provide work sites for many persons in population groups targeted by national programs, and could potentially be an important resource in efforts to obtain worthwhile employment opportunities for unemployed persons.

5. The flexibility and network of contacts of our volunteer boards of directors is a great advantage in the planning and delivery of employment and training services.

The National Collaboration for Youth supports*:

1. programs that promote basic educational competencies, job skills and employability skills, which are key for youth finding and keeping decent jobs;

2. services that encourage the linkage between education and employment;

3. greater involvement by industry to tie training as realistically as possible to the work place;

4. the mainstreaming approach of including youth of different experiences in a job program and providing them with an opportunity of working together;

5. federal leadership in the development of youth employment policies, programs and funding.

II. Background

A. Statement of the Issue

Hundreds of thousands of young people are coming of age poorly prepared for the workplace. This is an unhealthy

*approved by NCY executives 11/1/84

situation both for the individual and for society as a whole. Bureau of Labor Statistics show that as of November, 1984:

- The overall number of unemployed was more than 8.1 million; more than 38 percent of them are under age 25. The unemployment rate for 16-19 year olds declined from 18.8 percent to 17.5 percent
- The number of employed black teenagers declined from the previous month by 29,000.
- The unemployment rate of black teenagers rose to 40.8 percent.
- Only 23.1 percent of black and 35.9 percent of Hispanic teenagers are employed.
- Nearly one and a half million 16-24 year olds who are currently looking for work have never worked before.
- The teenage population declined by 8.3 percent between 1979 and 1983. The number of employed teens fell by 21.5 percent.
- Less than 3 percent of the more than 6.8 million jobs created since November, 1982, have gone to teenagers, who represent more than 17 percent of the unemployed.
- The 1983 annualized labor force participation rates of black and Puerto Rican teenagers were the lowest in history, 36.4 percent and 27.1 percent, compared to 56.9 percent for whites.
- Fewer than 7 of every 100 black teenagers have full-time jobs.[1]

During the past years, many volumes of research into the nature of the youth unemployment problem have been produced. These studies shed light on factors that give insight into the nature and the dimension of the youth employment problem. These factors are:

- Young women, regardless of race or ethnic heritage, consistently experience higher unemployment than their male counterparts (de Lone and Long, "What Do You Know About Youth Unemployment?", Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, 1982)

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[1] compilation of statistics by the Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project.

- The unemployment rate of 1983 black high school graduates (37.5%) exceeds that of white high school dropouts (23.5%). (Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project)

- Almost 30 percent of long-term unemployed 16-24 year olds are heads of households. (Ford Foundation, "Not Working: Unskilled Youth and Displaced Adults," 1983)

- It is estimated that 12 percent of high school students are functionally illiterate. Employer surveys indicate that it is the absence of basic literacy, not the lack of occupational skills, that is the principal barrier to youth employment. (Manpower Demonstration Research Corp., "Findings on Youth Employment: Lessons from MDRC Research," 1983)

- The problem of youth employment in minority communities is multifaceted: no jobs in general; lack of awareness about jobs and careers; lack of contacts; lack of work experience; lack of maturity; age and race discrimination. (de Lone and Long, "What do You Know about Youth Unemployment?")

- In many places, young people do not live near available jobs. In addition to the difficulties they face finding jobs and meeting employment requirements, underserved young people suffer a clear disadvantage in obtaining information about employment. (Ibid.)

Society's willingness to respond to the problem of youth employment is affected by the existence of widely held misassumptions, and these misassumptions have therefore in themselves become part of the problem. Some of the more persistent, commonly held beliefs are:

MYTH: The teenage unemployment problem is not as severe as some people lead you to believe.

FACT: Teenage unemployment is the worst it has been since statistics were instituted.

MYTH: Teenagers have poor work habits and attitudes.

FACT: Over 80 percent of the employers who participated in the Department of Labor's largest youth employment demonstration project said that young people had average or above average work habits and attitudes. (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, "Findings on Youth Employment: Lessons from MDRC Research," 1983)

MYTH: The problem of youth employment will substantially disappear as the youth population declines over the next two decades.

FACT: Demographic projections indicate that the absolute number of 16-21 year olds will decline. But, the segments of the youth population historically most likely to suffer from unemployment (blacks and Hispanics) will increase. While only 7.5 percent of the white population is under 18, 38 percent of blacks and 42 percent of Hispanics are under 18. (Bureau of the Census)

MYTH: Youth employment programs are not effective.

FACT: These programs have increased post-program employment rates and earnings. Classroom training increased post-program earnings by 10 percent in the first year after participation, and 13 percent in the second year. On-the-job training has raised earnings by 18 percent. Some school-to-work transition programs have increased earnings by nearly $1,000 per year for those who participate over those who do not. (Farkas, et al, "Impacts from the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects: Participation, Work, and Schooling Over the Full Program Period," 1982)

MYTH: Teenagers do not really want to work.

FACT: In 1980 and 1981, the Department of Labor sponsored a program that entitled all disadvantaged youth to a job. In exchange, the young people had to remain (or return to) school. The Department of Labor found that given the opportunity, one out of two poor 16-19 year olds will accept a minimum wage job under these conditions. This figure would have been higher except that those who did not participate generally had reasons, such as school or family obligations. (Manpower Demonstration Research Corp., "Findings on Youth Employment: Lessons from MDRC Research," 1983)

MYTH: The youth unemployment rate will decrease as the overall unemployment rate declines.

FACT: Statistics do not bear this out. For the period February 1982 to August, 1983, the overall unemployment rate dropped from 10.8 percent to 9.5 percent. The unemployment rate for youth aged 16-19 rose during that period from 20 percent to 23 percent. (The Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project)

B. Legislative History

1962 Manpower Development & Training Act
1964 Economic Opportunity Act authorizes Job Corps
1967 Summer Jobs Program
1973 Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA)

Title I - Comprehensive Manpower Services
Title II - Public Service Employment (PSE)
Title III - national programs
Title IV - Job Corps

1974 CETA, Title VI - PSE program for the cyclically unemployed

1977 The Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act added Title VIII to CETA, establishing the Youth Adult Conservation Corps, and amended Title III by adding three new youth employment and training programs: the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Project (YIEPP); the Youth Community Conservation and Improvement Projects (YCCIP); and the Youth Employment and Training Programs (YETP).

1978 Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC) authorized by the Revenue Act of 1978.

1979 All Title III youth programs moved to CETA Title IV.

C. Funding History

(All figures refer to millions, unless otherwise noted.)

Fiscal Year	Summer Youth	Job Corps	YCCIP	YACC	Other CETA Youth Pgms.	JTPA Block Grant to States
1980	$721	$470	$122	$234	$695	-
1981	769	465	-	174	719	-
1982	720	583	-	-	576	-
1983	824	616	-	-	-	2.2 billion*
1984 (est.)	824	830	-	-	-	3.3 billion*

*The law mandates that 40 percent of this figure be spent on youth.

D. Reason for NCY Interest

Studies show that young people are unemployed not because they do not want to work, but primarily because there simply are not enough jobs made available to them. Many young people, particularly minority youth, experience additional barriers to employment. Unfamiliarity with the ways of the labor market prevent a number of our youth from making a smooth transition into the working world. Others suffer from a lack of basic educational preparedness.

There is strong evidence that those who suffer from unemployment and its effects as youth are more likely to be unemployed as adults. (Mangum and Walsh, "Youth Knowledge Development Report," DOL, 1980) Work experience is an opportunity to develop a sense of self-worth, responsibility, and, or course, job skills.

Work experience offers a chance for young people to become productive citizens and to contribute their talents, to grow, and to learn. It helps youth to become integrated into society, rather than alienated from it.

E. Importance of NCY Involvement

The voluntary sector is a valuable national resource, important to the building of links between the business, labor, and educational establishments. The voluntary sector has the capacity to motivate, mobilize, and involve its board, volunteers, professionals, and youth members. It can facilitate a partnership of the public and private sectors; that partnership can strengthen national commitment to a comprehensive youth employment policy. The voluntary sector can help to change employer attitudes at the national level, and locally, it can help a youth find and keep a job.

Youth employment programs must deal with the range of problems that many young people face - education, previous work experience and usable skills. Such policy and programs will require a sizeable investment in the youth of our nation and a rearrangement of priorities to insure the future of our country through its next adult generation.

Young people need to learn proper work attitudes and habits such as arriving to work on time, getting along with fellow employees, and responding positively to supervision. Young people need opportunities for experiences that develop responsibility, self-reliance and initiative. NCY member agencies have provided programs such as skills and employability training, career exploration, job placement, counseling, guidance, as well as providing opportunities for a wide range of community service.

III. Current Status

A. Legislative Status

1. Legislation pending in the 98th Congress

Senate

S. 242, Quayle, et al, "Employment Opportunities Act of 1983"
S. 266, Cranston, et al, "Community Renewal Employment Act"
S. 493, Kennedy, et al, "Emergency Jobs and Training Act"
S. 724, Stafford, et al, "Youth Employment & Economic Assistance Act"
S. 1812, Metzenbaum, "Long-Term Unemployed Assistanct Act"
S. 2367, Metzenbaum, "Youth Education & Training Employment Act"

House

H.R. 999, Seiberling, et al, "American Conservation Corps" (passed)
H.R. 1036, Hawkins, et al, "Community Renewal Employment Act" (passed)
H.R. 5017, Hawkins, et al, "Youth Incentive Employment Act"

2. Current Funding Status

Fiscal Year 1984, see page 5.
Fiscal Year, 1985, n/a.

3. Current Law

The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) replaced CETA on October 1, 1982.

The Job Training Partnership Act requires that 40 percent of the employment and training funds be spent on youth. For the purposes of this Act, youth is defined as persons 16-21. Youth who are 14 and 15 years old may participate in a pre-employment skills training program if their Private Industry Council (PIC) has established one for the community. Youth must be economically disadvantaged, as defined by this Act. Ten percent of all participants, both adult and youth, do not have to meet the income eligibility standard if they face other barriers to employment, such as adjudication (ex-offenders), parenthood, or limited English speaking ability.

Except for the Job Corps, the JTPA does not authorize a separate national youth employment or training program. Each PIC may choose whether or not to establish a separate program for youth. If the PIC does not institute a separate program, youth participate in the same employment and training as adults.

The JTPA is not an employment program per se, in that, employment creation is specifically disallowed. Nor does the JTPA establish any particular type of training program.

While JTPA is still in its early stages, a number of problems have become evident. The first major assessment of JTPA (Grinker, Walker & Associates, "An Independent Sector Assessment of JTPA") confirms the anecdotal evidence that JTPA programs tend to serve individuals who need minimal training and to avoid individuals facing more serious obstacles to employment, and that very few (less than 10 percent) of all local administrative entities operate separate youth-oriented training programs. This study also confirms that localities are excluding community-based organizations from the planning and service delivery processes.

B. Programs of NCY Member Agencies

Facts for Life
American Red Cross, Connecticut

Facts for Life is an eight hour, nationally certified Red Cross course which includes life skills such as budgeting, banking and consumer shopping, and job readiness skills - searching and interviewing for a job, writing a resume, dressing for success, and getting along with a supervisor.

Career Education/Hire-a-Teen
Birmingham Area Council of Camp Fire, Inc., Alabama

In response to the youth unemployment rate, the Birmingham Area Council developed a two-part program, Career Education/ Hire-a-Teen, which would help prepare young people to enter the job market and would help them find jobs. Career Education is available as a course in area high schools. Participants are tested for interests and aptitude and are assisted in forming a "life plan," which includes both educational needs and career options. Participants in Hire-a-Teen get the same information and training as those in Career Education, but, in addition, they are put in touch with prospective employers. Good work habits, such as arriving on time and never leaving a task undone, are stressed.

"Jenny's Choice"
Girls Clubs of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Youth employment is one of the three current national program priorities of the Girls Clubs of America, and 83 percent of its affiliates across the country offer programming in this area. One example of an innovative local program with the national organization for purposes of national replication is "Jenny's Choice." Through this program, the Girls Club of Bethlehem engaged 12 teenage girls in a nine month internship experience that involved exploring careers in the telecommunications industry, participating in a basic employability skills program, and producing a half-hour television program on girls' career choices. The girls carried out all aspects of the necessary work: developing the story line; writing the script; casting; filming the production; editing; and promoting the finished product.

World of Work
Girl Scout Council of Tennessee, Arkansas and Mississippi, Tennessee

The Girl Scout Council of Tennessee, Arkansas and Mississippi worked with mildly retarded girls who were prepared for non-traditional occupations. Pre-employment, on-the-job training for 12 girls 15 to 18 years old was provided in the World of Work project. The girls met regularly in their Girl Scout troup, and local business provided job internships in a

veterinarian's office, in a greenhouse, in a child development center, and in a home for the aged, as well as in the local Girl Scout office.

YMCA
Norfolk, Virginia

The Norfolk YMCA has designed a program for in-school youth that provides part-time employment (20 hours per week) and tutoring sessions for personal growth and life skills management. The participants, ages 16 to 19, are organized into Community Improvement Teams, which identify needed community improvements and plan the tasks to be done. In addition to actual work performance, the participants' schedules include tutoring and developmental sessions for physical fitness, diet, personal values, and problems of drug abuse. To develop leadership skills, each participant serves as a team leader for a month. The program collaborates with the Norforlk Boys Club, Girls Club and YWCA.

San Gabriel Valley Boys Club
El Monte, California

More than 350 gang members in El Monte, California, most of them high school dropouts, have found employment in local businesses during the last two and a half years as a result of the efforts of the Boys Club and El Monte Police Department. The San Gabriel Valley Boys Club works directly with 2,000 youth from 15 different gangs in the city. The youth range in age from 16 to 22. Boys Club and police department staff work together to find jobs, counsel gang members, and supervise them after placement. Vocational counseling and training in work adjustment skills is provided in the form of the 24 hour World of Work program, which covers such essentials as how to fill out a job application and how to act in a job interview. Through the cooperation of businesses in El Monte, jobs have been found in electronics, industrial, and other manufacturing firms, schools, and a grocery chain. Individualized follow-up counseling keeps gang members on the job long enough to see that they can master the necessary skills and overcome frustrations and difficulties. Through supportive services and referral, the new employees receive help in resolving personal and work-related problems that might force them to leave their jobs.

IV. Record of NCY Action on the Issue

- (1976 & 1977 DOL Conferences)
- 1979 NCY statement in support of Title VI of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA)
- 1981 NCY testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Employment and Productivity regarding S. 648, Youth Employment Demonstration Amendments of 1981

- 1982 NCY statement in support of summer youth employment as part of S. 2036, the "Training for Jobs Act"
- 1983 NCY testimony before the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Employment Opportunities to present the Collaboration view on job creation legislation
- 1983 NCY testimony before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works regarding S. 724, Title V, Youth Employment